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President: Mr. Palma Cerna (Vice-President) ..... (Honduras)

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In the absence of Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Mr. Palma Cerna (Honduras), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*) (A/71/63-E/2016/8)

1. **Mr. Gass** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/71/63-E/2016/8), said that, although the United Nations development system remained a preferred partner for programme countries in addressing universal challenges, it must adopt a more horizontal and unified response, taking into account the needs of developing and middle-income countries, in order to remain relevant in the new development landscape and respond to the universal, integrated and specific challenges of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Programme countries were requesting assistance from the United Nations development system in the areas of environment and natural resources, sustainable development policies, agriculture and rural development, economic growth and employment, and health. The system had lost its first place as the preferred provider for regional and subregional coordination and must overcome strategic, financing and operational gaps that hampered its ability to work together as a system, especially in its humanitarian, human rights, development, and peace and security efforts, as required by the 2030 Agenda. It must move beyond coherence and coordination towards integration, defined as a shared understanding of goals, interlinkages and the normative frameworks that underpinned them.

2. As the nature of funding affected the ability of the United Nations development system to deliver in an integrated manner, the 2030 Agenda required a shift in funding practices to match its integrated, multidimensional approach. The funding trends of the previous two decades had continued, with contributions for operational activities for development totalling $28.4 billion in 2014, a 6.9 per cent real increase compared to 2013 that was entirely attributable to higher non-core funding. Core contributions had actually declined by 0.5 per cent in real terms and accounted for only 24 per cent of total funding, the lowest share ever. In addition, the majority of non-core funding was restrictively earmarked for specific projects, and resources were limited for pooled funds, which often relied on just a few donors. Many United Nations entities had responded by undertaking structured financing dialogues with Member States to improve the predictability, flexibility and alignment of funding and to facilitate the even distribution of sufficient resources across programme areas. Developing country contributions had grown by 26 per cent since 2011, amounting to $703 million in 2014, excluding local resources. In addition, $1.32 billion in local resources had been provided by developing countries for their own domestic programmes; however, efforts to ensure full cost recovery and broaden the donor base must continue, as operational activities for development still relied heavily on the top three donor countries, namely, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Japan.

3. Unfortunately, common budgetary frameworks, integrated budgets, enhanced transparency and accountability for results, and an aggregated system-wide overview of financial flows were still missing and the United Nations development system had not yet fully delivered on three of the key areas identified in the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review: poverty eradication, South-South cooperation and capacity development.

4. While there had been progress in the degree to which national institutions were engaged in the design and implementation of programmes, there was no visible trend towards greater use of national procurement, financial, monitoring and reporting systems, partly as a result of capacity gaps, political instability, inherent risks, and insufficient funding. The potential of South-South and triangular cooperation also remained underutilized; in order to provide support in that area, the United Nations development system required additional capacity and funding and must move away from predominantly individual agency-based approaches. Mechanisms such as "Delivering as one", the resident coordinator system

and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) must represent a floor rather than a ceiling.

5. While most Governments saw the "Delivering as one" approach as a major step towards greater coherence at the country level, survey results had shown that many programme country Governments were still assessing the benefits of that approach and the transaction costs associated with its adoption seemed to discourage some Governments. Although the UNDAF had made it possible to closely align United Nations activities with national plans and strategies, it appeared that it might require review in terms of its applicability to different situations, forms of presence and programming arrangements. A longer-term strategic approach linking sustainable development and humanitarian action, human rights, peacebuilding, and disaster reduction might be needed to translate the 2030 Agenda into focused and achievable actions.

6. The resident coordinator system had seen improvements in functional firewalls, recruitment diversity and performance appraisals, but offices were still often understaffed and underfunded. Different organizational models and business practices were needed to match expectations with the limited resources available. United Nations entities must do more to eliminate barriers to harmonization and simplification within and across entities, including access to information and infrastructure. Multi-country offices were needed to combine decision-making power, reach and access. A reduction in physical representation must not lead to a reduction in the engagement of the development system as a whole, but should instead maximize comparative advantages and resources.

7. The highly integrated 2030 Agenda posed a number of challenges for the still loosely integrated United Nations development system. Moving forward, it would be necessary to clearly define the system's functions, build on its comparative advantages and harness the strength of external players in line with United Nations principles. The United Nations development system must provide a truly integrated response, it must be agile and must align its functions, funding, governance, organizational arrangements, capacity and partnership approaches with the imperatives of an interdependent 2030 Agenda. Greater clarity was needed on what was meant by the United Nations development system and its operational activities for development. Such terms had generally been defined by funding practices, which did not adequately reflect expectations regarding the 2030 Agenda.

8. The 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review would play a key role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and should serve as a system-wide framework for planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. It should be elevated to a strategic instrument enabling the United Nations to fully deliver as a system.

(b) Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the World Food Programme (E/2015/34/Rev.1, E/2015/35, E/2016/4, E/2016/14 and E/2016/36)

Dialogue with the executive heads of the United Nations funds and programmes

9. **Ms. Clark** (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), panellist, said that the implementation of, and lessons learned from, the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review were critical for the roll-out of the 2030 Agenda. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) had developed standard operating procedures that codified best practices from the experiences of "Delivering as one" countries and had been embraced by all entities in the United Nations development system as well as country teams. Eighty-eight programme country Governments had expressed their interest in having the "Delivering as one" approach formally implemented in their countries.

10. The selection, training, and appraisal of resident coordinators had been overhauled, and the gender, geographical and agency balance of those selected had improved. Greater inter-agency cooperation had been achieved at the country level, including by establishing issue-based results groups, as envisaged by the new standard operating procedures. Approximately 131 country teams were now organized around such groups and working without silos, representing a total of 320 joint programmes. Close to 40 country teams were further improving operational effectiveness through common business operations strategies. The

UNDAF process had been simplified in some 40 countries, including by paying more attention to gender equality and women's empowerment. Resident coordinators and country teams had been provided with policy tools and strategies to support South-South and triangular cooperation. A new approach to conflict and development analysis had also been developed in order to help resident coordinators and country teams engage the entire United Nations development system in conflict-sensitive strategic planning.

11. The forthcoming quadrennial comprehensive policy review should be ambitious, strategic and focused on results across the entire system; guided by the 2030 Agenda, it should become the overarching framework driving coherence in the system as a whole. The 2030 Agenda provided an important opportunity to advance sustainable development globally. National ownership and leadership were critical in that regard. Already, 81 Governments had requested support from United Nations country teams in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. Approximately two-thirds of the countries that had volunteered to report on the roll-out of the new Agenda at the high-level political forum on sustainable development were developing countries.

12. At the request of Governments, UNDP was helping countries to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals into national development plans, strategies and budgets. UNDG had issued a reference guide to support all country teams with mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support in accordance with country needs, capacities and demands, drawing on the joined-up expertise of the whole system. Country frameworks must have strong national ownership and endorsement, including greater use of national capacities and systems where possible.

13. The positive impact of delivering as one had been seen at the country level; now it was necessary to catch up at the regional and global levels to ensure the full coordination of support for the 2030 Agenda behind a common approach. Adaptation to instruments was occurring rapidly on the ground. In Kenya, an ambitious new UNDAF process had been embedded into the country's new national plan, presenting a good example of how the United Nations development system could adapt quickly and respond to the challenges of doing business differently. Country teams must be flexible in order to scale up efforts quickly or change course in light of lessons learned or unforeseen events. It was also necessary to have differentiated responses to different country typologies. However, high-impact results must be delivered as a system: the days of working separately in silos were over.

14. The 2030 Agenda was an integrated agenda that required work across all the pillars of sustainable development for both Governments and the United Nations. The World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 would present a good opportunity to enhance further collaboration. An empowered resident coordinator system must be at the centre of greater integration, coordination and impact. It should be composed of the best talent available, who should be given the authority to bring a wide range of actors into play. A capable and well-resourced resident coordinator system must be strongly grounded in country development realities, be institutionally supported by a broad field presence, not be politicized, and enjoy full support and commitment across the United Nations system.

15. As the nature of funding had a major influence on the operations of the United Nations development system and on incentivizing collaboration, predictable and flexible funding practices must be adopted. The current funding architecture was complex, fragmented and included ever-increasing levels of non-core funding. How the system was funded mattered: it must be able to call on a broader range of traditional and innovative instruments in order to be fit for purpose.

16. Pooled funding, as well as unearmarked or minimally earmarked funding, supported strategic and joined-up operations, while fragmented and highly earmarked funding did not. Member States held the solutions to such challenges. More pooled and multi-year funding would support the transition to a single framework for planning and financing humanitarian, peacebuilding and development actions. Changes in funding practices must also be met with changes in the way the United Nations development system attracted, managed and reported on funding and allocations. Furthermore, higher levels of data transparency were required across the entire United Nations system to meet the standards of the International Aid Transparency Initiative.

17. Strengthened and innovative uses of data and analysis, global knowledge-sharing platforms, technology and public engagement techniques would be crucial for delivering on the 2030 Agenda. The United Nations development system encouraged

experimentation, pooled data and knowledge, learning by doing and cross-country learning. Coordinated work on national statistical and data capacity development, an area of continued high demand, must remain a high priority for Governments in implementing the Agenda. Numerous agencies were currently working on a coordinated and data-based approach to midterm reviews of strategic plans with a view to ensuring full alignment with the 2030 Agenda. The ambitious, integrated and transformational nature of the new Agenda demanded adaptation and change from Member States, United Nations entities and the development system as a whole.

18. **Mr. Lake** (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)), panellist, said that the meeting was taking place at a very important moment, namely, the dawn of the sustainable development era. Following diplomatic success at the General Assembly, action was now required. What mattered were results for the girl denied a seat in the classroom, the boy denied a vaccination, and the children trapped by conflict or vulnerable to natural disasters. Without reaching those left behind by inequalities, poverty and humanitarian emergencies, the Sustainable Development Goals could not be achieved. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review was an opportunity to summon capacities across the United Nations system to make progress on the new Goals and help children and families left behind. Poor children should receive the health care and education that would help them as adults to compete on a more level playing field with the children of richer families, thus making their own lives better and their societies more prosperous.

19. United Nations staff members were stepping up their efforts to deal with emergencies that were growing in scale and number, but the increase in donor resources was insufficient. While there was a need to increase efficiency and work with partners within and beyond the United Nations system, the already overburdened staff should not have new and expensive bureaucratic layers imposed on them. The current quadrennial comprehensive policy review had led to structural improvements, but structural reform should not be implemented as an end in itself rather than for achieving results. The 2016 review could achieve results for the most disadvantaged, reflect the shared commitment to universality and support cooperation across sectors. It would be an opportunity for the United Nations to break the vicious circle of inequality. When the poorest, most disadvantaged and hardest-to-reach children were denied an education, health care, nutrition and protection, inequalities could only worsen. Millions were being condemned to a life of disadvantage simply because of who they were, where they lived or their gender.

20. UNICEF worked with Governments to conduct surveys and produce data disaggregated by household wealth, geography, gender, ethnicity, language, age and other key factors. The Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) of UNICEF was useful for monitoring programmes and policies to identify and overcome barriers preventing the most marginalized children from accessing the services they needed. Data collection would also be essential to measure progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. UNICEF and the World Food Programme were organizing a series of workshops bringing agencies together with academics and the private sector to share new ideas and innovations in data collection.

21. The new quadrennial comprehensive policy review was an opportunity to reflect a shared commitment to universality, supporting the most vulnerable people in every society. In order to do so, the United Nations should be ready to support Governments in every country, especially as more developing countries made the transition from recipient to donor status, and from low-income to middle-income or even high-income status. UNICEF was exploring a new policy to maintain an operational presence in upper-middle-income countries.

22. The new quadrennial comprehensive policy review could support integration. Long-term development efforts, humanitarian responses and efforts to combat climate change were too often kept conceptually and operationally separate, with distinct funding appeals, advocacy campaigns and conferences, as if extreme poverty and inequalities were not linked to conflict, and as if climate change, disease and resource scarcity all existed in separate worlds. In reality, when a girl displaced by conflict received an education, it not only shaped her mind, it built her future so that she could contribute to her family and society when she became an adult. Education in the midst of a humanitarian crisis was inherently related to development; in fact, an education that included good citizenship and attention to disaster risks was part of both peacebuilding and resilient development.

23. It was important to remember that when humanitarian and development efforts were perceived as serving political purposes, they would be considered suspicious. Those efforts should not therefore be politicized or too closely tied with the more political United Nations offices even though collaboration took place at the strategic level. Coherence should, however, be increased. Country teams had shown that standard operating procedures could bring together expertise and programmatic strengths from across the United Nations system. For example, in Tanzania, new HIV infections had been halved in the previous five years thanks to coordination between the Government and the United Nations family; in Ethiopia, collaboration between UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had helped 140,000 South Sudanese women and children receive food, medical care and protection.

24. The current quadrennial comprehensive policy review had already simplified programming, enabled a focus on common results, and aligned global strategic plans. The standard operating procedures had shown that United Nations agencies could work more closely together and with Governments and other partners. However, in spite of many successes, country offices had identified challenges such as the lengthy processes needed to transfer funds and a tendency for procedures to take precedence over results. The new quadrennial comprehensive policy review should therefore shape programmes and partnerships so as to reach goals, reflect the universal mandate, coordinate processes, and thereby achieve the desired results.

25. **Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka** (Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), panellist, said that UN-Women welcomed the strong gender equality focus of the historic documents agreed upon in 2015. However, 2016 must be a year to start delivering on promises. That required a United Nations system that was strong, effective and adequately resourced. The Council's dialogue was an opportunity to shape the future of the United Nations development system, as well as a forum where bold proposals for change could be made, especially in the context of assessing the implementation of the current quadrennial comprehensive policy review and making preparations for a new resolution. UN-Women, whose universal mandate covered peace and security, human rights, sustainable development and humanitarian action, was a result of Member States' resolve to improve efficiency, integration and results, and its composite nature gave it a triple mandate of normative support, coordination and operational activities. One of the lessons that UN-Women had learned was that normative and operational work could not be separated. By integrating international normative standards into programming, the United Nations system could support countries in addressing the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable.

26. UN-Women, together with other members of the United Nations system, had been called upon to support Member States as they implemented the Sustainable Development Goals. Achieving full integration between its normative, coordination and operational roles needed programming tools and processes that enhanced synergies in day-to-day programming. At the global level, the United Nations required a more integrated planning and financial architecture, as well as more integrated funding solutions for an interlinked, indivisible and universal development agenda. Just as implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level required a whole-of-government approach, a whole-of-system approach was needed at the level of the United Nations development system. Coherent work added value to the countries and people that the United Nations served, especially in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment. Over 80 joint gender programmes were currently being implemented and more could be done through the implementation of the standard operating procedures for delivering as one. The functioning of United Nations country teams could also be further simplified. Integration required the removal of artificial barriers and greater flexibility across humanitarian, peace and security, and development work. New models were needed to support the universal agenda, including in middle- and high-income countries, and common parameters should be developed to determine country support. UN-Women already had a differentiated country presence ranging from fully fledged country offices to multi-country offices, programme presence or gender advisers embedded in resident coordinators' offices, which was an effective cost-saving mechanism.

27. Data disaggregated by gender was especially important for gender equality. Mexico had spearheaded efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean to develop a knowledge platform on gender statistics for

policymaking through a partnership between the National Statistical Institute, the National Women's Institute, UN-Women and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Surveys had been conducted to measure women's time in unpaid work as a means of better understanding their contribution to the economy and designing related policies.

28. The forthcoming meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women would be instrumental in drawing up implementation plans for the Sustainable Development Goals from a gender perspective and preparing for the midterm review of the UN-Women strategic plan, involving initiatives that integrated the normative, coordination and operational roles and provided a common platform for UN-Women and its partners to plan efforts and identify gaps.

29. UN-Women envisaged a new strategic quadrennial comprehensive policy review focused on system-wide results and guided by the Sustainable Development Goals. The review should indicate expected strategic outcomes, should be less focused on processes and give greater scope to United Nations entities to identify the best way to achieve results. It should also provide a strong mandate to the United Nations system to invest in gender equality. The current quadrennial comprehensive policy review had strategically positioned gender equality and women's empowerment as a system-wide issue and had driven the development of new gender policies and strategies in many entities. It had also emphasized the importance of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, which had been a success story, with 64 entities reporting against the same framework. However, many challenges remained. Tracking of resource allocation and expenditure for gender equality and women's empowerment remained limited. UN-Women had a critical role to play in advancing the 2030 Agenda and needed quality core investments for multi-year planning to ensure that no woman or girl was left behind. The elimination of inequality was central to the 2030 Agenda and required effective and inclusive national institutions, strong partnerships and accountability. The participation of civil society, including women's organizations, would be decisive and required the United Nations system to be able to leverage the comparative advantages of all its parts.

30. **Ms. Londén** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)), panellist, said that the world was experiencing major demographic change as a result of population growth, ageing, urbanization and migration. The challenge was to empower all people to achieve their potential, sustain inclusive economic growth and manage climate change. The 2030 Agenda recognized that human beings must be at the heart of sustainable development, with a focus on women, young people and vulnerable groups, and on ensuring that no one was left behind. UNFPA would sharpen its focus on reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health, a key target under Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Full implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development would accelerate progress towards sustainable development by connecting population dynamics, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, migration, human rights and climate change, and provide recommendations on protecting the most marginalized.

31. The 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review was an opportunity for Member States to provide strategic guidance to the United Nations system on operationalizing the 2030 Agenda. The review should be strategic, inclusive and focused on outcomes rather than processes and systems. Furthermore, it should mandate the United Nations system to be guided by the five principles underpinning the 2030 Agenda, namely, universality, integration, human rights, equality, and the data revolution.

32. Data was of particular importance because the people who most needed to be reached were the ones about whom the least was known. UNFPA would harness the data revolution in order to strengthen national data ecosystems that included vital statistics such as birth, marriage and civil registration data in order to ensure that every individual had a legal status and was able to exercise his or her rights. Disaggregated, authoritative and accessible data would be needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Accordingly, UNFPA would support the establishment of costed road maps for national data ecosystems and provide technical support for the generation of geo-referenced census findings.

33. For UNFPA, giving priority to human rights meant keeping the poorest girls in school; protecting them from violence, early marriage and other harmful practices; providing reproductive health information; and providing opportunities for both girls and boys to

reach their full potential. Through the analysis of population structures and the dynamics of poverty, UNFPA promoted investment in education and health, especially sexual and reproductive health, and employment for young people, in particular disadvantaged girls. Investment in young people had the potential to influence the age structure of the population and generate a demographic dividend with a subsequent increase in economic growth.

34. Partnerships were a critical enabler for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. The results achieved by UNFPA to date had been possible only by engaging a broad range of partners, including in the private sector. For example, UNFPA was working with mobile telecommunications companies to track medicine and contraceptive stocks and the spread of disease; it was also working with a multinational consumer goods corporation to strengthen supply chain management, and with another international company to deliver maternal and newborn health services in Africa. Multi-stakeholder networks could increase the availability and use of integrated sexual and reproductive health services, especially for young people and adolescents.

35. Sustainable, predictable and flexible funding of the United Nations development system was needed to support greater integration, including across development and humanitarian work, and to enable the system to perform its functions successfully, deliver results and ensure greater impact. Business as usual was not an option, especially in middle-income countries, where demands and capacities were changing. UNFPA had recognized those transformations in its business model. It was also promoting South-South and triangular cooperation for the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, supporting countries to share know-how in areas such as censuses, sexual and reproductive health services, gender-based violence and youth participation.

36. Through the current quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the United Nations system had made successful efforts to streamline common operations while recognizing that inter-organizational diversity was a source of strength. Mutual acceptance of different business practices could be considered part of the emerging quadrennial comprehensive policy review and, consequently, a pillar of the operational elements of the 2030 Agenda. In addition to that approach, UNFPA had supported inter-agency coherence within the scope of UNDG and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), in particular through the implementation of the standard operating procedures, the business operations strategy and in-country support service consolidation. UNFPA had also coordinated initiatives such as the common oversight and accountability model, and taken part in other system-wide initiatives, including the International Aid Transparency Initiative. Innovation should become a guiding principle of the new quadrennial comprehensive policy review so that new solutions could be found to eliminate duplication, reduce costs and improve services. When the United Nations spoke with one voice on difficult issues, people listened, and when it delivered as one it could do more and fulfil its commitments to the people it served.

37. **Mr. Abdulla** (Deputy Executive Director, World Food Programme (WFP)), panellist, said that the United Nations development system, which had an important role to play in helping to translate the global vision for development into reality, needed to link together the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding dimensions of its work. Now that countries around the world had pledged to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including the eradication of poverty and hunger, progress must be accelerated to reach those furthest behind. The World Humanitarian Summit was an opportunity to commit to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable people affected by conflict and disaster, where the challenges posed by poverty and food insecurity were compounded by both slow and sudden onset shocks. The United Nations development system brought together a uniquely broad spectrum of actors that could transcend the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding divide and support solutions tailored to context. Existing frameworks such as the UNDAFs, common country analysis and integrated strategic assessments must dynamically address all relevant sectors and establish linkages to risk mitigation and conflict prevention, as appropriate. The key to operationalizing synergies and coherence was for both United Nations and non-United Nations actors on the ground to use shared analysis as a basis for a collective response.

38. The way in which humanitarian assistance was delivered could support broader development priorities, as had been seen in Somalia, where significant investments had been made in the 1990s to rehabilitate the country's ports in order to ensure the flow of humanitarian supplies; now those ports were a foundation for national economic activity and development. At the community level, cash-based transfer approaches that supported humanitarian activities served as a platform for financial inclusion and had generated a digitally connected network of retailers and users, thus illustrating how investments in one area could serve multiple purposes and deliver broader benefits when appropriately designed and implemented.

39. While humanitarian funding was often provided to deliver rapid, short-term responses to sudden onset emergencies, funding decisions should also take into account longer-term planning horizons in order to maximize the long-term benefits. As the majority of people needing assistance already lived in chronic or protracted crises, comprehensive solutions were needed. To deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals in such contexts, donors should support more flexible, predictable and sustainable funding of longer-term humanitarian and development work. They should also expect to see responses that were based on demand-driven outcomes and aimed to reduce vulnerability and need over time.

40. Looking beyond traditional development funding to innovative and private sector options, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development had recognized the broader range of partners and enablers needed for sustainable growth and reaffirmed the opportunities that existed in new forms of multi-stakeholder partnerships and financing modalities. As shown by the R4 Rural Resilience Programme, innovative financing could be pursued through a combination of weather-indexed insurance and disaster mitigation activities to help people prepare for impending disasters. At the same time, digital technology provided an unprecedented opportunity to address a myriad of challenges, including isolation and knowledge gaps. The Purchase for Progress initiative for example, connected many small-scale farmers to remote markets and provided them with the ability to collect data and access real-time price information.

41. New forms of engagement must be backed by robust and transparent financial and accountability systems. For WFP, that involved building on current practices such as advance financing mechanisms and the application of principles such as full cost recovery, while also going further to enhance transparency and accountability in resource management, thereby demonstrating value for money and improving decision-making. WFP was embarking on a new strategic plan, as well as working to review and reform its financial architecture and results framework. With closer alignment and the use of standardized cost categories, the programme would be better positioned to contribute to harmonized results reporting that captured economic effectiveness and efficiency.

42. Far greater emphasis was being placed on the collective outcomes delivered by the United Nations system on the ground. Planning and implementation systems must capture the relationship between key stakeholders and agreed results and budgets. It was also important to capitalize on the opportunity to achieve greater coherence between the peacebuilding, development and humanitarian agendas based on the recognition of a more integrated long-term results orientation. The United Nations system must embrace new ways of operating jointly, and with a broader range of partners, for a better collective outcome. The new quadrennial comprehensive policy review should play a key role in setting the United Nations development system on the right path to implementing the new 2030 Agenda.

43. **Ms. Nguyen** Phuong Nga (Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations), discussant, said that the survey on implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review was a good exercise for Governments to provide robust and evidence-based feedback on their interactions with the United Nations development system, especially with regard to its coherence, effectiveness and efficiency. Her delegation viewed the development system as a trusted partner with local knowledge and long-standing experience, and also valued its expertise and neutrality. An independent evaluation of the One Plan for 2012-2016 in Viet Nam showed that its expected outcome had been 83 per cent achieved by the end of 2015.

44. While the United Nations development system had comparative advantages, it faced new challenges and must do more to help countries to achieve multidimensional sustainable development against a

backdrop of declining resources. In the new development landscape, the United Nations development system must change the way it performed its mandate if it was to remain fit for purpose. The system had a unique role to play in helping countries to integrate the 2030 Agenda into national development strategies and priorities. However, that did not mean it should do everything; rather, it should strengthen the functions for which it had comparative advantages while increasing national ownership. It should assist countries to implement globally recognized normative frameworks and communicate those norms to wider populations through innovative channels, providing integrated policy advice, global expertise and knowledge while taking into account the need to remain political neutral. In addition, the United Nations development system must improve its capacity to build, mobilize and leverage the capacity of Member States, as well as scale up and refocus capacity-building on young people, whose ability to innovate was critical for the implementation of the new development agenda. The system must mobilize and coordinate external resources, serving as a bridge linking countries in need with potential partners and facilitating South-South and triangular cooperation; it should help countries to enhance their tax systems with a view to optimizing domestic resources, especially by avoiding cross-border tax evasion; and it should focus on building up statistical capacities in order to facilitate follow-up and review.

45. For middle-income countries such as Viet Nam, the United Nations development system should provide support through knowledge-sharing, basic and applied research and technology transfer, thus helping such countries to build resilience, sustain hard-won development gains and access vulnerable population segments. In order to meet such expectations, the development system must think, plan and deliver as a system, not as single entities working in silos; in that connection, the "Delivering as one" approach had already proven to work for many pilot and self-starter countries, including Viet Nam.

46. The imbalance between core and non-core funding must be tackled and pooled funding modalities should be enhanced. At the country level, United Nations country teams needed a multi-stakeholder management mechanism to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation, as well as midterm indicators to adjust the course of action in the case of unsatisfactory progress.

47. **Mr. Pedersen** (Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations), discussant, said that the objective was to implement the 2030 Agenda and eliminate poverty without contributing to climate change or leaving anyone behind. The new Agenda would require the mobilization of trillions of dollars annually and domestic resource mobilization would be crucial, since, although official development assistance (ODA) was extremely important, especially for least developed countries, it remained a limited resource, totalling $130 billion in 2015. Of that $130 billion, the United Nations system received approximately $28 billion, including both humanitarian and development assistance; in order to succeed, it would therefore need to spend such funds correctly and catalytically.

48. He urged the panellists to share their experiences of collaborating with partner countries, the World Bank and other multilateral financial institutions, and to explain their strategic thinking on how to create synergies and move the agenda forward in concrete terms. There was a growing consensus among Member States that the United Nations development system needed to develop differentiated modes of engagement for different country contexts. It also needed to offer coherent policy advice to countries receiving ODA and to understand the special challenges faced by countries in fragile situations. He asked the panellists to explain how a model with differentiated modes of engagement might work in their organizations and across the United Nations development system as a whole. Panellists were also asked to identify potential obstacles for the United Nations to deliver as one in politically fragile Member States, as well as ways to overcome such obstacles.

49. It was extremely important for United Nations country teams to develop common priorities, based on the Organization's value added in particular contexts. In practice, individual organizations were often guided more by their own interests in branding and resource mobilization than by the need to ensure the relevance of the country team as a whole. UNDAF priorities were often very broad, while strategic planning remained weak, which allowed individual organizations to include their own wish lists of activities in the UNDAF. He wondered how the well-known phenomenon of mission creep could be avoided.

Finally, he asked both the United Nations development system and the Member States to reflect on how best to strengthen the resident coordinator system, which, though key to the whole development system, was currently too weak and must be endowed with greater authority.

50. **Mr. Tatiyapermpoon** (Observer for Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the 2030 Agenda and other global commitments adopted in 2015 were not open to reinterpretation and must be implemented in accordance with their object and purpose. According to the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations development system should focus on eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty. Both shorter-term humanitarian assistance and the system's long-term development objectives should therefore be geared towards poverty eradication in developing countries. The United Nations development system should make concerted efforts to provide integrated support at the national, regional and global levels in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The system could use General Assembly resolution 67/226 and the upcoming 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review cycle as guidance for system-wide policy orientation, development cooperation and assistance, and country-level modalities, in order to ensure and enhance its relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and credibility.

51. The United Nations system should prioritize the allocation of core and non-core resources so that the use of resources was more predictable, flexible, less earmarked, better aligned with the priorities of programme countries, and better suited to the situation on the ground. At the same time the United Nations development system should continue efforts to broaden its donor base and maintain a balance between core and non-core resources. Core resources should not be used to subsidize non-core activities and the financing of non-programme costs should be based on full cost recovery proportionally from core and non-core funding sources.

52. The 2030 Agenda and other intergovernmental commitments agreed in 2015 should be mainstreamed into system-wide planning and reporting. In addition, greater country-level coordination and coherence was needed to enhance effective use of diminishing core resources and the expertise of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

53. **Ms. Naeem** (Observer for Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway) had been effectively integrated into the 2030 Agenda. It was, however, important to ask how the calls for coherence and coordination in existing mandates had been translated into action within the current models of delivering operational activities at the national level, and what institutional mechanisms had been put in place to improve cooperation among small island developing States, especially since they were spread across four regional commissions of the United Nations. That might be an important lesson to learn as more frameworks were implemented at the global level.

54. Small island developing States presented unique opportunities for service delivery at the national level, including existing and forthcoming plans to introduce regional UNDAFs such as the single multi-country UNDAF for Pacific Island countries and territories. It would be interesting to hear the views of the panel on that model of service delivery, especially in the light of the increased requirements of the 2030 Agenda, the Samoa Pathway and other development frameworks at the national level, and bearing in mind that the approach had been perceived as less helpful by programme countries and entities of the United Nations system.

55. **Ms. Haynes** (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community, said that there was an even greater need for further coordination and collaboration between United Nations funds and agencies at the regional and national levels to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Transparency, accountability and flexibility were paramount. It would be interesting to hear from the panel whether policy tools were being developed to help country teams with longer-term inter-agency planning.

56. A review of the UNDAF in Trinidad and Tobago had shown that it did not sufficiently address the environmental pillar. She asked how UNDAFs could be aligned to address the 2030 Agenda in its entirety, whether that task was primarily the responsibility of Member States, and whether the United Nations development system could provide support. She would also like more information on the integration of approaches at the country level among United Nations programmes, funds and agencies. Further capacity-building support for Member States, especially for

institutional strengthening, would be welcome. In that regard, there did not appear to be any plans or timelines to integrate efforts to expand assistance for Member States in the important area of data and statistics.

57. **Mr. Al-Musawi** (Iraq) said that the United Nations development system continued to be the main partner for Member States needing support to implement the decisions of United Nations bodies. At the same time, other multilateral bodies had taken over from the United Nations in certain areas. That might not be a positive development since the United Nations was the main entity for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. He noted the reduction in core funding over the previous 15 years and wondered why there was a growing imbalance between core and non-core funding. To build the confidence of Member States and other partners, the United Nations should do everything possible to improve the situation.

58. **Mr. Estreme** (Argentina) said that the United Nations development system remained the preferred partner for Member States and, although there was room for improvement, it was not necessary to revamp the entire system. In the forthcoming complex negotiations in the context of the forthcoming quadrennial comprehensive policy review, which would take place in a short time frame, there was a risk of being excessively ambitious. In implementing the new universal 2030 Agenda, there was a need for differentiation and flexibility, without which the system would lose relevance, given the existence of strategic competition with other regional, subregional and non-United Nations actors. It would not be possible to find answers to all the issues at stake during the discussions on the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review; however, the 2030 Agenda had shown the value of being ambitious and demonstrated that intergovernmental negotiations could result in a truly transformative outcome. The international community had 15 years to implement the 2030 Agenda, and in that time many lessons would be learned and reflected in several quadrennial comprehensive policy review cycles. It would be important to work strategically in order to identify what results should be specifically targeted in the current cycle.

59. Some countries would be unable to implement the 2030 Agenda in an ambitious and transformative manner without sufficient core resources. In that regard, funding must be tailored to the mandates of each entity in the United Nations development system, as well as to the main objective of the new agenda, namely poverty eradication. While middle-income countries, especially upper-middle-income countries, could certainly do more, some were already providing the United Nations development system with significant resources. Argentina, for example, had financed a UNDP project with $200 million of its own funds, on a full cost recovery basis, although it would cease to use UNDP if the cost recovery rate were to double or triple. Moreover, some donors had said that they did not contribute to core resources because they had doubts about accountability and transparency. More work was therefore needed in those areas. He asked how pooled resources could be implemented in integrated programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean.

60. A paradox existed in that each agency represented on the panel had a specific mandate to perform, and was required to engage in reporting and follow-up in relation to that mandate; yet at the same time, agencies were being asked to work in an integrated manner and achieve common results on the basis of the priorities set by Member States. It was clear that the mandates of the various agencies could not be changed ahead of the forthcoming quadrennial comprehensive policy review. Member States, agencies and other actors had to internalize each of the challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda and work together in the medium term to find a system that really met the needs of Member States. Although the system did not work as well as it should, there had been progress in recent years towards greater integration in the fulfilment of the various entities' mandates.

61. **Mr. Sobral Duarte** (Brazil) said that the 2030 Agenda was transformative on account of its universal character, and its implementation would therefore require the United Nations development system to adapt and change. The 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review would be an opportunity to set the United Nations development system on the right path. The mandates contained therein already addressed a number of important issues, including poverty eradication, gender equality, demand-driven capacity-building and national ownership, with a focus on results rather than outcomes in accordance with new indicators to be devised to measure the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The current quadrennial policy

review mandates also included partnership approaches based on transparency and oversight.

62. The United Nations system must move beyond simply repeating the discussion on core and non-core resources, notwithstanding the undeniable relevance of that debate. Other pertinent modalities were also contained in the policy review's mandate, including South-South cooperation as a complement to ODA, improved governance and increased participation of developing countries in the United Nations development system. Such elements should be built upon in the new quadrennial comprehensive policy review, which should also seek to identify major gaps in delivery and ways of working that could be filled through multilateral cooperation and the adaptation of the United Nations development system.

63. Some of the Sustainable Development Goals were already well positioned for universal action, for example, Goal 5, since gender had already been incorporated into the universally applicable Beijing Platform for Action and Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and violence against women was likewise a concern for both developing and developed countries. Other Goals, however, referred to common objectives that had been articulated more recently and consequently had less established delivery mechanisms in place: for instance, the embryonic framework for achieving sustainable patterns of consumption and production. Yet other goals, such as Goal 16 on the promotion of peace and inclusive societies, and Goal 10 on the reduction of inequality within and among nations, were entirely innovative as universally applicable targets, and clearer definitions would be needed.

64. Member States should consider how to deal with the universality and multiplicity of goals and how to substantially increase financing for development. As the development system had only 15 years to implement the 2030 Agenda, it would be important to take full advantage of all opportunities to strategically adapt the system to meet the new challenges faced.

65. **Mr. Egli** (Switzerland) said that the 2030 Agenda was too transformative and too different to allow for business as usual. He asked Member States to share their ideas on how the United Nations development system should adapt to the new 2030 Agenda.

66. Coordination at the local level had greatly increased over the previous decade. He wondered whether the bottlenecks now existed more at Headquarters than at the local level. In addition, there was the question of whether the United Nations development system should work as one or whether agencies should continue to work independently with strong coordination; in the latter case, what would be the overall cost of such coordination? He was also interested to know whether the United Nations development system truly worked as a team.

67. Paragraph 88 of the 2030 Agenda stressed the importance of system-wide strategic planning, implementation and reporting in order to ensure coherent and coordinated support to the implementation of the new Agenda by the United Nations development system; he would be interested to know how the panellists thought the system could answer that request from Member States. Lastly, his delegation proposed the idea of a system-wide strategy document and system-wide funding to provide incentives for agencies within the development system to work together.

68. **Ms. Flores Herrera** (Panama) said that there had never been greater demand for considering the reform of the United Nations development system. It was not enough to simply "reboot" the system, and efforts must be made by both the development system and by Member States. After agreeing to the ambitious 2030 Agenda, Member States were working hard to align their national priorities with the Sustainable Development Goals and to engage civil society. As for the United Nations development system, changes to the resident coordinator system were taking place on the ground and she was encouraged by the commitment shown by a number of agencies to enhancing collaboration with countries transitioning to middle-income or higher-middle-income status. She also appreciated the parallels that panellists had drawn with the corporate world and its ability to learn from failures.

69. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review would be an excellent opportunity to rethink the United Nations development system and to continue to mainstream the main pillars of human rights, development, and peace and security, with a focus on transparency and accountability. It would be necessary to unify the normative system of planning, monitoring and evaluation and, in that regard, gender scorecards

were an example to be followed The spaces and interactions between the human rights, development, and peace and security pillars were becoming increasingly important. She wondered how the need for more reliable core funding should be reconciled with the reality of a diminishing pool of resources, and asked the panellists to outline any other specific expectations they had for Member States from a unified perspective.

70. **Ms. Clark** (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), said that the United Nations development system was definitely working as a team. As it was a federation of agencies, it had no top-down leadership but rather a strong team ethos. Resident coordinators were team leaders but not autocrats.

71. In an era of considerable change, operations must be continually updated, making the necessary adjustments while building on the comparative advantages of the United Nations development system. The outcomes sought from the quadrennial comprehensive policy review must be viewed strategically in order to determine when a General Assembly mandate was required and when it was not.

72. A concrete example of successful pooled resources was the UNDP-Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund, which had been made possible by a very large contribution of $750 million from Spain. The fund could be accessed by United Nations country teams only if three or more agencies came together with a proposal; it had therefore incentivized collaboration. The One Funds established for the "Delivering as one" pilot countries were another good example of pooled resources.

73. Success in mobilizing non-core resources partially explained the imbalance between core and non-core resources. It was, however, important to identify whether there was a critical level of core resources that made sense for development. It was also true that there had been a drop in absolute levels of core funding, partly owing to the various national austerity budgets adopted following the global financial crisis. In addition, the events of the previous five years in Syria and a number of catastrophic emergencies worldwide had drained resources from ODA. As a result, contributions of all kinds were immensely valuable.

74. **Ms. Brandt** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)), speaking on behalf of the Executive Director of UNICEF, said that reforms would help to achieve better results but there was also a need to build on what was already working. During the period of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, there would be four quadrennial comprehensive policy review cycles, which would make it possible to build on lessons learned and move forward. Statistics and data, particularly disaggregated data, were important for meeting the promise to leave no one behind. Data analysis capacity should therefore be increased and new and innovative data should be integrated. In that regard, UNICEF was supporting the development of national statistics capacities. Meanwhile, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data was drawing on the joint activities of a number of partners.

75. UNICEF actively participated in work on communications and advocacy in one of the UNDG working groups. It was important to draw upon the comparative advantages of each agency, some of which had more strengths than others. There was still room for improvement at Headquarters but much progress had been made since the last quadrennial comprehensive policy review. In particular, the implementation of the standard operating procedures would not have been possible without full support at Headquarters level.

76. **Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka** (Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) said that teamwork was excellent at the country level and the team approach enabled UN-Women to coordinate and mainstream its work on gender. Many issues that were critical to women arose in every country, whether rich or poor. Ministers from almost every country had talked to her about violence against women because it was a global problem and no country had achieved gender equality. As a result, UN-Women had a universal mandate that enabled it to work in middle-income countries, least developed countries and developed countries alike. Because of its differentiated presence, UN-Women was able to adapt its activities in line with available resources and needs. On the issue of data, it should be noted that Mexico had helped to build the capacity of 19 Latin American countries to utilize data effectively.

77. **Ms. Londén** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that there was great appreciation of the data revolution in the United Nations system, as reflected in the report of the Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. UNFPA helped countries to mobilize domestic resources for use in country programmes, thereby reinforcing the principle of national ownership. Co-financing agreements had been reached in certain middle-income countries and UNFPA incentivized cost-sharing by matching the funds that each country actually provided.

78. **Mr. Abdulla** (Deputy Executive Director, World Food Programme (WFP)) said that funding should be predictable; that was more important than whether it was core or non-core. The United Nations development system was clearly working as a team at all levels to assist Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

The meeting rose at 6.00 p.m.